United Nations E/2007/49

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
26 April 2007

Original: English

Substantive session of 2007
Geneva, 2-27 July 2007
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*
The role of the United Nations system in promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all

The role of the United Nations system in promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

By its decision 2006/274, the Economic and Social Council decided to devote consideration to the theme "The role of the United Nations system in promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all" at the coordination segment of its substantive session of 2007. The present report of the Secretary-General highlights the centrality of those objectives in international and national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, to achieve the internationally agreed development goals. This was stressed in the ministerial declaration adopted by the Council in 2006.

The present report provides an overview of the United Nations system initiatives both at the policy and operational levels responding to the ministerial declaration.

The report highlights emerging challenges in pursuing those objectives. It makes recommendations on ways to translate those goals into United Nations system policy and operational frameworks and strengthen the United Nations system's analytical and programmatic support to countries in making these goals a priority. They stress: (a) action that can be taken at the policy level by the United Nations functional and regional commissions; (b) inter-agency collaboration that would enhance system capacity to promote the employment and decent work objectives; and (c) partnerships with all relevant actors to facilitate an effective realization of those goals.

* E/2007/100.

07-32127 (E) 180507

Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	Introduction	1–7	3
II.	Policies and strategies: an overview	8–28	4
	A. Global level	9–11	4
	B. Regional level	12–16	5
	C. Country level	17–28	6
III.	Operational level	29–87	8
	A. Organizations of the United Nations system	29–39	8
	B. Decent work agenda	40–47	10
	C. Capacity-building	48–59	11
	D. Employment and decent work in post-conflict situations	60–65	14
	E. Progress in integrating the goals of full and productive employment and decent work in national frameworks (Common Country Assessment, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the Millennium Development Goals and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers)	66–81	15
	F. Non-resident agency focal points	82–85	18
	G. Guidance note for reporting on the Millennium Development Goals	86	18
	H. Guidelines for common country assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework	87	19
IV.	Conclusions	88	19
V.	Recommendations	89	19

I. Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its decision 2006/274, decided to devote consideration to the theme "The role of the United Nations system in promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all" at the coordination segment of its substantive session in 2007. The decision of the Council to focus on the centrality of full employment and poverty reduction to the development-related work of the United Nations is in follow-up to the ministerial declaration adopted at the substantive session of 2006.[1]

2. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, by committing to full, freely chosen, decent and productive employment as a basic priority of economic and social policies, made an earlier major conceptual contribution to promote the centrality of employment and decent work in the development and poverty reduction agenda. To respond to the concerns regarding the quality of employment, the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1999 defined the concept of decent work as the converging focus of four strategic objectives embedded in the mandate and values of ILO: the promotion of rights at work; employment; social protection; and social dialogue.

3. In the 2005 World Summit Outcome, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of more than 150 countries, they solemnly resolved "to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of our relevant national and international policies as well as our national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, as part of our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals".[2]

4. This commitment was elaborated in the ministerial declaration of 2006 on the theme "Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development". The ministerial declaration recognized the crucial role of employment both as an end in itself and as a means to achieve poverty eradication and other key development objectives.

5. The 2006 ministerial declaration defined the employment challenge as multifaceted and requiring action by governments, the international community and the United Nations system. The Ministers and Heads of Delegations, inter alia, called upon (a) all the relevant international organizations to contribute, through their programmes, policies and activities, to the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all in accordance with national development strategies; (b) the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies to support efforts to mainstream the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all in their policies, programmes and activities; (c) the functional and regional commissions to consider how their activities contributed to the goals of full employment and decent work for all; (d) all relevant agencies to collaborate actively in the development of the toolkit to promote decent work that was currently being developed by ILO; and (e) ILO to consider developing time-bound action plans to 2015, in collaboration with all relevant parties.

[1] See E/61/3, chap. III, para. 50.

[2] General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 47.

6. To respond to the ministerial declaration, the United Nations system organizations have either initiated new activities or reinforced their existing programmes. Their activities are focused on strengthening the links between macroeconomic policies and employment generation; promoting the establishment of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises; bridging the gender gap both in terms of income and unemployment; creating opportunities for youth employment; addressing the concerns of migrant workers; promoting employment generation in post-conflict situations; and, above all, building the capacity of governments to achieve the objectives of employment generation and decent work for all.

7. The provisions of the ministerial declaration address the work of the United Nations at two levels, namely, policy and operational. The present report will address these two areas and focus on the progress made so far, future plans and emerging challenges that need to be addressed in pursuing the employment goals.

II. Policies and strategies: an overview

8. At the policy level, the work of the United Nations system addresses global, regional and country-level dimensions relevant to the achievement of the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all.

A. Global level

9. The 2005 World Summit Outcome and the ministerial declaration of 2006 redefined the challenge of productive employment and decent work for all as a key element of poverty reduction strategies and strategies to achieve the international development agenda. They stressed the multifaceted nature of those goals, encompassing a broad range of economic and social policies and the need to develop comprehensive approaches to respond to those challenges. That was a step forward in making the ILO decent work agenda a centrepiece of strategies stretching beyond labour policies.

10. With its forty-fifth session, the Commission for Social Development launched its new two-year action-oriented implementation cycles. The theme chosen for the 2007-2008 review and policy cycle of the Commission is "Promoting full employment and decent work for all", taking into account its interrelationship with poverty eradication and social integration. The review segment at the Commission's forty-fifth session, in February 2007, concluded with the Chairperson's summary of its deliberations, which included summaries of three panel discussions.[3] The Chairperson's summary underscored the view that full employment, decent work and social justice were key to economic development, security, stability and inclusive societies. The Commission will convene its policy segment at its forty-sixth session, in 2008, and is expected to adopt a negotiated outcome document.

11. The Commission on the Status of Women has focused on the gender dimension in the goals of full employment and decent work for all. For example, the Commission, in agreed conclusions adopted at its fiftieth session in 2006, urged stakeholders to design policies and programmes to provide equal access for women

[3] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 6* (E/2007/26), annexes.

to productive employment and decent work, to remove structural and legal barriers, as well as stereotypical attitudes to gender equality at work, and to promote equal pay for equal work or work of equal value. While recognizing the value of women's unremunerated work, the Commission called upon stakeholders to develop and promote policies that facilitated the reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities.

B. Regional level

12. The United Nations regional commissions brought focus on the specific regional characteristics and challenges for the formulation of effective policies and strategies to achieve the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has repositioned employment squarely in the context of human and social development as a way to address widespread poverty, unemployment and underemployment in the African region. The ECA strategy stresses the importance of mainstreaming employment in national development efforts. It also facilitates the implementation of the Ouagadougou Plan of Action of 2004, where African leaders acknowledged the importance of employment policies and programmes for alleviating poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. However, there is still need for further work to ensure that employment policies and programmes are fully accommodated into national development strategy plans, policy frameworks or poverty reduction strategies.

13. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is preparing for an expert group meeting on "Employment Policies and Economic Development in ESCWA Countries, including Those Emerging from Conflict", with the aim of promoting dialogue and exchange of views and best practices between members of ESCWA, regional experts, United Nations agencies, and private sector representatives. In collaboration with regional United Nations agencies and the League of Arab States, ESCWA is also preparing a report analysing the link between education and youth employment in order to develop policy recommendations to address issues surrounding youth unemployment.

14. In Latin America, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has devised a range of proposals addressing regional and national economic issues relating to employment. To improve the social and political environment for increased long-term capital investment, ECLAC has prepared a strategy on strengthening social cohesion in the region, which will be discussed at the Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government in November 2007.

15. In Europe, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) focuses its work on creating an environment for economic development that produces more economic opportunities and rising wages. In Asia, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in its *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2006*, focused specifically on "Emerging unemployment issues in Asia and the Pacific: rising to the challenges"; its findings highlight that rapid economic growth alone may not be enough. Governments need to intervene in order to make the growth process more equitable and widely shared. Those findings will be the focus of the policy dialogue during the sixty-third session of ESCAP.

16. In recognition of the high and growing demand for knowledge generation and dissemination on employment-related issues, the World Bank's Social Protection Network and the Poverty Reduction Group have produced a joint proposal for operationally oriented research on the labour market, job creation and growth.

C. Country level

17. In the ministerial declaration, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations called on the United Nations system to support national efforts to achieve the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people. They also requested the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies and invited financial institutions to support efforts to mainstream the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all in their policies, programmes and activities, in alignment with national efforts.

18. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) has been at the forefront of the efforts to promote follow-up of the ministerial declaration and a systematic integration of the goal of full and productive employment and decent work into the individual work programmes of various United Nations entities. In this regard, the High-level Committee on Programmes of CEB decided to support development of a Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work. ILO was asked to take the lead in developing the Toolkit in collaboration with interested organizations and in consultation with all members of the Committee. A proposal for the Toolkit was submitted by ILO and was endorsed at the session of the High-level Committee on Programmes held on 20 and 21 March 2007 in Rome and submitted to CEB.

19. At its recent session, held on 20 and 21 April 2007 in Geneva, CEB endorsed the Toolkit and expressed strong support for the initiative, and for the inclusive approach taken for its development. The Executive Heads considered that the methodology could usefully be replicated in other areas as part of the effort to pursue policy coherence within the system and find practical ways for the system's support to countries to derive concrete benefit from such enhanced coherence.

20. The Toolkit strives to provide a lens through which agencies could see how their strategies, policies, programmes and activities are interlinked with employment and decent work outcomes; how they can enhance these outcomes by taking full account of the implications of their strategies, policies, programmes and activities for employment and decent work, while devising them and when advising and assisting countries and constituents in their adoption and implementation. The Toolkit, which will continue to be refined, aims to promote coherence and synergies among member agencies of CEB and enhance their role in promoting decent work for all through their actions at the global, regional and country levels. As such, it is addressed to the staff of member agencies of CEB at Headquarters and in the field. More specific audiences can be identified for future versions of the Toolkit, tailored for particular areas of application. The indirect beneficiaries of the Toolkit initiative and its future extensions will eventually be the national constituents and target groups of each and every organization, and ultimately the people of the world who have the legitimate aspiration of a fair chance to a obtain decent job.

21. As for the next steps regarding the Toolkit, each agency will carry out an initial self-assessment as a baseline and will be identifying and posting tools to be

shared in an interactive platform to be used throughout the system. Branching out to the country level will be one of the first priorities. In addition, a reciprocal capacity-building programme within the system will be agreed. In a second phase, the application of the Toolkit will be expanded to donors and the international development community, civil society, parliamentarians, local authorities, policymakers and practitioners, thus creating a common language and shared understanding to reach the objective of decent work for all. ILO will be available to assist agencies and serve as a resource for improving the agencies' understanding and application of the Toolkit, in establishing the individual action plans and indicators and in establishing a community of practices on this topic.

22. In conjunction with the development of a Toolkit to promote decent work, the ministerial declaration requested ILO to consider developing time-bound action plans to 2015, in collaboration with all relevant parties, to achieve international commitments regarding the promotion of full and productive employment and decent work for all. The promotion of the Toolkit in the United Nations bodies and agencies is the first step in a proposed three-phase approach to developing inter-agency action plans on decent work.

23. In the first phase, agencies are expected to formulate, in close cooperation with ILO, their own action plans by the end of 2007 and beginning of 2008 for their contribution to the implementation of the provisions of the ministerial declaration promoting full and productive employment and decent work.

24. In the second phase, lasting until the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, following up on their action plans, agencies are expected to develop ownership, enhancement and measurement of the decent work elements in their activities. This should result in identifying broader decent work dimensions in their programmes and in consolidating decent work elements into larger clusters of decent work in their own agendas. Decent work dimensions are expected to be integrated into the agencies' policies and programmes with identifiable decent work outcomes and indicators measuring progress. At the end of this phase, agencies should also be able to identify operational decent work elements which could be integrated into a United Nations system-wide decent work action plan.

25. In the third and final phase, agencies would collaborate to establish, by the end of 2009, a system-wide action plan for 2010-2015 with the assistance of ILO. It is expected that this action plan would be focused on implementing the decent work priorities selected by the agencies, thus putting the whole implementation process within the 2015 framework, as requested in the ministerial declaration. Such priorities could include system-wide programming, research, knowledge sharing and project fund-raising. They would also necessarily include integrated country strategies, providing system-wide coherence in line with the "One UN" and decent work country programmes, thus bridging United Nations system-wide action at the global and country levels. The common action plan should target measurable results by 2015.

26. There are other inter-agency efforts to promote the integration of employment goals in the policies, programmes and activities of United Nations agencies. For example, ILO, together with other agencies of the United Nations system, the financial institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO), has launched an initiative to promote better understanding of the linkages between growth, investment and employment, as well as greater policy coherence in these areas. This

initiative, the Policy Coherence on Growth, Investment and Jobs Initiative (PCI), has been ongoing since 2004. Agencies have acquainted each other with their own knowledge bases and methodological approaches, and their research findings relating to the growth, investment and employment nexus. The next meeting, hosted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), will be held in Paris in May 2007.

27. The PCI Initiative has led to research collaboration between ILO and WTO to understand the employment impacts of trade. In February 2007, the WTO secretariat and ILO issued a joint technical study entitled *Trade and Employment: Challenges for Policy Research*. The objective of the study was to improve understanding of how trade and labour markets interact and affect the lives of millions around the world. The main conclusion was that there is a need for greater coherence in the two domains to ensure that trade reforms would have positive effects on both growth and employment.

28. The PCI has also led to similar collaboration, still under discussion, between ILO and the World Bank in some pilot countries. There is also a demand to decentralize the Initiative to subregional and national levels as well. That would involve not merely the activities of the multilateral system at these levels, but also dialogue between economic ministries — planning commissions and ministries of finance — with ILO constituents, ministries of labour and social partners.

III. Operational level

A. Organizations of the United Nations system

29. Several organizations of the United Nations system have been working on various elements of the employment and decent work agenda, and some have stepped up efforts to feature that agenda more prominently in their country-level programmes and operations addressing the various challenges identified in the present report.

30. A number of United Nations entities have been working on establishing a macroeconomic environment conducive to the achievement of the employment and decent work agenda.

31. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has collaborated for some time with ILO on the nexus between economic growth, employment and poverty reduction, recognizing the inadequate attention paid to the role of employment in poverty reduction. The joint work of the two agencies aimed at: (a) building a knowledge base demonstrating the importance of productive employment as a means of translating the benefits of economic growth into poverty reduction; (b) increasing understanding of key stakeholders of the role of productive employment in achieving the Millennium Development Goals; (c) strengthening capacity, especially at the national level, to integrate employment into development plans and strategies; and (d) undertaking advocacy work at various levels.

32. At the national level, training courses have been organized by the two organizations to demonstrate ways and means of integrating employment into development planning and policymaking. In addition to research and training, UNDP and ILO have also organized workshops and seminars at both country and intercountry levels to disseminate the findings of relevant studies and facilitate

policy dialogue on relevant issues. Such events served as useful mechanisms for advocacy and sensitization of relevant stakeholders on the importance of integrating employment into economic policymaking.

33. ECLAC has assisted governments in designing and implementing economic policies aiming at enhancing regional competitiveness and reducing their vulnerability. As a way to formalize the informal, low-paid sector, ECLAC has also promoted the creation of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, infrastructure development, education and training programmes, credit technology and transfer, and public administration reform, contributing to create the conditions for productive employment and productivity growth.

34. The ECA *Economic Report on Africa 2005* was entirely devoted to meeting the challenges of unemployment and poverty in Africa, where unemployment is viewed as a loss of human and social capital manifested in increasing poverty in the continent. The strategy proposed by ECA aimed at mainstreaming employment in macroeconomic policies; promoting structural transformation and diversification; investing in human resources development; and strengthening institutional capacities. ECA has collaborated closely with sister organizations, including the African Union, regional economic commissions and ILO, to establish a regional employment forum of technical experts and policy facilitators, and it is developing a medium-term comprehensive employment-friendly, macroeconomic and national development policy framework. The Commission has also supported an integrated approach to the human resources development programme aimed at producing skills required by the economy. That approach is meant to reduce the skill mismatch existing in most African countries, which has negative effects on aggregate labour demand and on returns to education in general. Active labour market policies or programmes are integral components of this approach. ECA has proposed the establishment of a national skill building fund to provide resources for training activities, tailored to meet the needs of women and young people.

35. ESCAP has focused on developing small and medium-sized enterprises and their subregional, regional and global integration. ESCAP projects include developing policy frameworks for promoting indigenous technology development, innovation capacity and supply side capacities of small and medium-sized enterprises; and increasing the contribution of business to sustainable development and the creation of better quality jobs.

36. ESCWA's support has focused on labour market reforms supporting the creation of decent employment opportunities and has assisted national decision makers in that reform effort. The annual survey of ESCWA for 2006 highlighted a regional economic expansion without significant improvements in the labour market situation.

37. In 2006 the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat organized a Forum on Productive Employment and Decent Work to explore policy directions towards optimizing the impact of full and productive employment on sustainable development. The Department's flagship publication, the *Report on the World Social Situation 2007*, will address the issue of employment and decent work.

In 2007, the Department issued a *Review of National Action Plans on Youth Employment: Putting Commitment into Action*.[4]

38. The World Bank has recently expanded its analytical and operational portfolio in this area, recognizing that growth, although essential to poverty reduction, can also be jobless. The challenge of under- and unemployment is multisectoral and its solutions may lie outside the labour market. The World Bank's analytical work aims at identifying those strategies and policies that can both enhance the impact of growth on employment generation and improve the quality of available jobs. The Bank's approach focuses, inter alia, on partnerships both within and outside the Bank.

39. In its work IMF has focused on achieving sustained growth with employment generation and other desirable labour outcomes. Its strategy emphasizes the creation of a stable macroeconomic environment; a business environment facilitating higher productivity investment and entry of small businesses to facilitate the shift from an informal to a formal economy; and human capital through better health and education of workers. The strategy also emphasizes improving governance as a way to improve the business environment and high quality public investment, and increasing the quantity and quality of external aid to accelerate growth with a favourable labour outcome. IMF also works on preventing economic crises, which lead to job losses, higher unemployment and lower real wages, by reducing countries' vulnerability and helping them to recover from those crises when they occur.

B. Decent work agenda

40. A number of United Nations organizations/entities are involved in normative work supporting national efforts to adopt labour standards and social provisions for full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for youth, women and migrant workers.

41. The World Health Organization (WHO), for example, has worked on supporting legislation, national policy frameworks, and resource mobilization to protect workers' health and improve performance of and access to occupational health services and surveillance systems on workers' health and on occupational hazards. It has also contributed to strengthening the role and capacities of ministries of health to facilitate the integration of workers' health objectives and actions into national health strategies and economic development policies and poverty eradication strategies. WHO has also worked on developing indicators on decent work in the health sector and on special measures to minimize the gaps between risk levels and the health status of different groups of workers. The WHO Global Plan of Action on Workers' Health (2008-2017) will be carried out together with member States in close coordination with other international agencies such as ILO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

42. As part of its strategy to improve women's access to decent work, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has focused on removing discriminatory provisions in labour laws, including those concerning migrant

[4] ST/ESA/311 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.07.IV.4).

women. UNIFEM also works on strengthening protection for informal sector workers and empowering home-based workers.

43. ECE has contributed to developing and harmonizing standards in the areas of transportation, energy, environment and trade to create a safe and decent work environment, including safe technologies.

44. The Commission also supports labour market policies and outcomes promoting equal economic opportunities for men and women as an important ingredient for a successful growth strategy through, e.g., mainstreaming gender in budgetary, fiscal, employment, small and medium-sized enterprises, and pension policies. ECE has provided a Forum for Regional Dialogue on Gender Perspectives on Employment and a Regional Symposium on Mainstreaming Gender into Economic Policies (Geneva, 2004) to promote networks between line ministries, national gender machineries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It has also organized regional forums and subregional workshops promoting women's entrepreneurship and raising awareness on gender aspects of the policies of small and medium-sized enterprises.

45. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has worked on supporting the efficient and equitable management of international labour migration, in order to optimize its positive impact and minimize any negative effects for both countries of origin and destination as well as for migrant workers and their families. IOM works with governments, employers and workers in countries of origin and destination, and with other international organizations, to promote legal forms of labour mobility as an alternative to resorting to irregular migration and to provide effective protection and services to labour migrants and their dependants. In 2005, IOM supported the creation of a Business Advisory Board to promote dialogue with the private sector on labour migration issues.

46. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) focuses on improving labour standards and creating fair conditions of employment in the agricultural sector and for rural livelihood and on facilitating access to land and property rights, especially for women.

47. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) supports the establishment of intellectual property systems for creative industries to allow the generation and exploitation of property rights as a tool for economic growth and employment generation. Recent studies carried out in several countries of the world have provided strong evidence of the increasing share of employment in creative industries.

C. Capacity-building

48. A majority of United Nations organizations have programmes and activities directly supporting national efforts to generate employment in the context of poverty reduction strategies.

49. The activities of FAO range from providing training, education and information on improved agricultural practices and markets to strengthening rural institutions and improving rural labour statistics, including gender-disaggregated statistics. FAO has recently created a new division, Gender, Equity and Rural Employment, which will promote the decent work agenda and the creation of

productive employment and sustainable livelihoods in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors. Emphasis is given to rural youth and the reduction of gender-based discrimination and inequalities.

50. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) promotes various initiatives investing in education, entry-level employment and access to reproductive health and related health care to allow young people, especially women, to balance their productive and reproductive roles and be better equipped to pursue productive employment opportunities. Employment and income are also components of a comprehensive programme to prevent HIV infections. The Multi-Media Centre established in 2004 in Benin is an example of employment initiatives promoted by UNFPA to pursue these objectives. The Centre provides young people around the country with on-the-job training in communication and provides education about preventing HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies. In 2006, UNFPA supported the opening in Botswana of more youth centres at the district level.

51. UNIFEM has provided technical assistance to bridge the digital divide between women and men living in rural and urban areas through e-village initiatives in Jordan. The e-villages consist of several centres that provide villagers, women in particular, with opportunities to develop new skills. This initiative expanded its scope by partnering with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and WHO in implementing mini e-villages throughout the country.

52. UNESCO promotes entrepreneurship education so school graduates can form their own businesses, thereby creating not only self-employment but also employment for others. UNESCO-UNEVOC (International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training) has sought to sensitize and increase the knowledge of vocational leaders, planners, practitioners and researchers from selected countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Arab region with regard to how best to prepare learners for gainful employment and decent work.

53. ECLAC supports labour market policies and technical cooperation projects, taking into account youth and women's vulnerability in the labour market and innovation as an increasingly relevant factor for competitiveness and productivity. It has advanced proposals for the design of social security systems better adapted to the new circumstances of a more volatile labour market. It has also carried out research identifying the new educational and technical training requirements of the new economic and technological conditions to ensure employability and productivity of the labour force.

54. ECA supports national capacity to formulate, implement and monitor employment policies, including data collection, storage and dissemination, and capacity for regular assessment and analysis of employment issues. It also supports the implementation of employment expansion plans especially for vulnerable groups in least developed countries and post-conflict economies, including through national, regional and global partnerships. ECA collaborates closely with ILO and the African Development Bank, and with the African Union and the regional economic commissions, to promote employment generation strategies and to support employment policies and programmes in Africa.

55. ESCWA worked with ILO and local NGOs on employment generation in rural areas. It launched in 2002 the Technology, Employment and Poverty Alleviation

initiative (TEPA) in selected countries, collaborating with municipalities, development funds, private enterprises and civil society institutions. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) were introduced in impoverished and marginalized communities in order to empower and build capacities of individuals and communities as well as harness ICTs for entrepreneurial activities.

56. ESCAP has supported projects assisting Central Asian and Caucasian countries in improving the effectiveness of policies and programmes on poverty reduction through income and employment generation. National seminars on "The state of income and employment generation programmes in Central Asian and Caucasian countries" were held in Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Armenia and Tajikistan in 2006, and the subregional seminar on the same subject was held in Armenia in February 2007. ESCAP has provided policy advice to participating countries on creating self-employment opportunities and income generation and setting up a system of training of officials at different levels for participatory planning and evaluation.

57. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has delivered vocational training courses, supported microenterprises and facilitated the integration of young people into the labour market as a way to improve their livelihoods and reduce their dependence on illicit crop cultivation. UNODC supported alternative development programmes and provided technical assistance in agricultural technology, business management, product quality assurance and marketing. An increasing proportion of UNODC beneficiaries participate in reforestation and agro-forestry activities.

58. In 2006, UNEP started an initiative on "Labour and the environment" aimed at building a partnership for labour and the environment as part of its efforts to engage major groups and stakeholders in the work of the organization and in environmental policy formulation at large. UNEP started engaging with workers and trade unions to raise awareness of the linkage between labour and the environment, and how embracing environmental protection measures and transition to cleaner production patterns could bring about new employment prospects. As part of this process, UNEP, ILO and WHO, workers and trade unions have jointly published a book entitled *Labour and the Environment: A Natural Synergy*,[5] which argues that protecting the environment and ecosystem, and ensuring decent jobs and just transition, must be treated as common sustainable development policy objectives.

59. Since the beginning of 2004, the World Bank has produced 110 analytical and advisory activities with a focus on employment; they have been particularly concentrated in Europe and Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean but have also addressed the challenge of job creation in other regions. The last three issues of the *World Development Report* (on investment climate, equity and development, and youth, respectively) have also focused on job creation. This large volume of knowledge and expertise has fed into World Bank Country Assistance/Partnership Strategies and has informed lending operations and evidence-based policymaking at the country level, via the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) process and shared growth strategies.

[5] United Nations publication, Sales No. 07.III.D.16.

D. Employment and decent work in post-conflict situations

60. The ministerial declaration of 2006 underlined the important contribution that employment generation can make to post-conflict reconstruction and development and stressed the urgency of generating employment opportunities for men and women whose livelihoods have been destroyed by the impact of conflict or disaster.

61. A number of United Nations agencies use labour-intensive work programmes as a strategy to build assets and promote self-reliance of poor people and communities in situations of crisis, emergency and post-conflict.

62. In an effort to promote a United Nations system-wide approach to employment creation policies in post-conflict situations, the Policy Committee of the Secretary-General of the United Nations has requested ILO and UNDP to co-lead a system-wide initiative addressing the critical role of employment creation, income generation and reintegration in post-conflict settings. The initiative mainly focuses on the peacebuilding elements of employment, including income stabilization, reintegration and sustainable long-term employment creation. It takes into account the root causes of conflict, sustainability of impact, and the careful administration of aid that avoids harmful spillovers to society and the economy. It is expected to produce some guiding principles and policy guidelines for the United Nations system activities and country-level programming supporting employment in post-conflict settings and guide the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. These will be reviewed next June by the Secretary-General's Policy Committee.

63. World Food Programme (WFP) programmes such as Food for Work (FFW) and Food for Training (FFT) are designed primarily to preserve assets during crisis and expand access to assets during recovery. Target beneficiaries participate in food-supported asset creation and income-generation activities, which enhance their resilience and ability to manage shocks and meet necessary food needs. In 2005, in the aftermath of the tsunami, close to 37,000 Sri Lankans were participating in WFP FFW projects rebuilding homes and critical infrastructure, such as coastal roads and bridges. Over 12,000 people, 85 per cent of the WFP workforce, are locally recruited staff. At least 75 per cent of all WFP local food-aid monitor recruits will be qualified women.

64. Microfinance lending products of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) are specifically targeting youth to help mitigate political violence and incorporate young women and men in the local economy. Each year around 20 per cent of the borrowers are 18 to 24 years of age, while 25 per cent of current UNRWA microfinance lending is directed to women microentrepreneurs. In addition to microcredit, UNRWA provides technical and vocational education programmes for employment in the local and regional labour markets for approximately 500,000 Palestine refugee children every year. UNRWA also runs eight vocational training centres for nearly 6,500 students annually; 35 per cent of the trainees enrolled in the scholastic year 2006-2007 were women. The employment rate for UNRWA vocational graduates exceeds 75 per cent within one year of graduation. UNRWA has run an emergency employment programme in the West Bank and Gaza since the beginning of the intifada in 2000. UNRWA employs nearly 27,000 full-time local staff, the vast majority of whom are Palestine refugees themselves.

65. The World Bank strategy in post-conflict reconstruction focuses on schemes promoting employment through infrastructure rehabilitation and small-scale construction and reconstruction, which are financed through its Social Fund. The Bank also utilizes small-scale and microenterprise credit schemes to restart production and promote employment and small-scale immediate demobilization activities.

E. Progress in integrating the goals of full and productive employment and decent work in national frameworks (Common Country Assessment, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the Millennium Development Goals and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers)

Decent work country programmes

66. The decent work country programmes (DWCPs) set the framework for ILO support to the decent work goals and priorities defined at the country level. Following a pilot phase of decent work country programmes launched in seven countries from 2001 to 2005, it has become the mainstream approach promoted by ILO to support the adoption and realization of the decent work agenda at the country level. By early 2007, some 25 countries in all regions had formulated DWCPs with the active engagement of the tripartite partners, the Government, employers and workers' organizations. Many more were under preparation.

67. Each country programme includes a unique combination of country-specific priorities across the four strategic objectives of promoting rights at work, creating employment, promoting social dialogue and social protection. The overarching themes across the DWCPs are poverty reduction, promoting the conditions for a fair globalization and supporting democratic rights and extending social dialogue.

68. The ILO DWCP is not only a framework for ILO action at the country level. It is based on a participatory approach involving the ILO constituents in defining priority areas for action, taking into account the ILO mandate and strategic objectives. The decent work agenda provides a strong platform to promote policy convergence, integration and coherence within national strategic frameworks. Its realization cuts across several Government agencies and institutions at national and local levels and requires the deep engagement of the tripartite partnership and many other stakeholders. Moreover, the DWCPs are also potentially powerful platforms for broad country-level partnership with the development community, including the international financial institutions, the United Nations system and bilateral donors, but also for cooperation with civil society and the private sector.

Partnerships on decent work country programmes in the United Nations system

69. Some United Nations system agencies are taking concrete steps to promote further collaboration on employment and the decent work agenda.

70. An agreement between the executive heads of UNDP and ILO, expressed in a joint letter of February 2007 to their staff, intensified collaboration between the two agencies to work together to make decent work a central element in United Nations country programmes. This enhanced collaboration will contribute to strengthening the role of the Resident Coordinator as an effective advocate of the entire United

Nations agenda, and that of the specialized agencies in line with the goals of "One UN". The implementation of the agreement envisages joint policy analysis, monitoring and design, and jointly developed policy guidance on the role of employment, governance and social development.

71. The agreement also foresees joint meetings, information exchange and learning exercises between resident coordinators, UNDP country directors and ILO field office directors from selected countries at the ILO International Training Centre in Turin. A workplan defining in concrete terms the implementation of this collaboration is being elaborated. Its implementation at the country level will be piloted in a number of countries selected on the basis of various criteria, e.g., existence of a decent work country programme. This enhanced collaboration is expected to facilitate the consultation and participation of ILO constituents in United Nations country programmes and processes and thus to strengthen and widen national ownership.

72. FAO and ILO signed a memorandum of understanding in September 2004, which commits the two agencies to promoting decent and productive rural employment in agriculture and off-farm industries. FAO and ILO have also collaborated on a joint ILO-FAO-IUF (International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations) publication on "The role of agricultural workers in promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development" and a policy briefing on "Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) and agricultural workers". ILO and FAO are also considering a joint strategy for rural employment.

73. The World Tourism Organization and ILO will sign this year a memorandum of understanding to enhance their support to their members through national, regional and international activities and targeted approaches. The objective of the memorandum of understanding is: to promote greater coherence among the economic, social and environmental aspects, as well as other areas related to development policies and practices such as tourism and labour; to strengthen the effectiveness of technical assistance; to contribute to the elaboration of more coherent professional standards; and to help better to emphasize labour remuneration in the tourist industry and its product value chain.

74. Collaborative efforts and agreements aiming at promoting the decent work agenda and greater policy coherence among development actors are also under way with other partners in various regions of the world: e.g., a memorandum of understanding between ILO and the Asian Development Bank to cooperate in poverty reduction and social protection efforts across the region. This is intended to ensure that social concerns are addressed together with development financing. ILO has also worked closely with countries where poverty reduction strategies are being developed with the World Bank.

75. ILO is currently engaging with interested agencies in policy dialogue and/or training workshops to build agency capacities to mainstream the decent work agenda and employment in their work. These efforts could eventually lead to greater knowledge sharing, identification of gaps and capacity-building where necessary, greater synergies and the mobilization of untapped potential.

Decent work country programmes: the Common Country Assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework

76. In a number of countries, decent work country programmes resulted in employment and other dimensions of decent work, such as women's entrepreneurship and HIV/AIDS at the workplace, being selected as key dimensions of CCA/UNDAF processes.

77. The recent ILO/UNDP partnership on the implementation of the decent work agenda at the country level is likely to continue to expand this trend. UNDP, as the manager of the Resident Coordinator System, has a central role in facilitating the support of United Nations system organizations to national strategic priorities. The close collaboration of ILO with UNDP will better ensure a more systematic inclusion of the decent work agenda in the United Nations system's support to national development priorities and strategies.

Decent work country programmes: the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers frameworks

78. Decent work country programmes are the main tool of ILO to promote the integration of the decent work agenda into national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies. From the outset, decent work country programmes emphasized the importance of linking the decent work country programmes to major policy frameworks, including the PRS. The PRSP and PRS framework has been driven by debt relief, development aid and poverty reduction agendas dominated by issues such as structural adjustment, budget and fiscal policies in some 70 countries in all regions, which are eligible for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries' (HIPC) Initiative and beyond. Since 2001-2002, ILO has developed a systematic approach to influence the PRS process to include the decent work perspective as the most direct and empowering route out of poverty. ILO engagement in the PRS process included a major investment in capacity-building at the country level and among ILO staff, including the development of comprehensive tools and advocacy guides that connect two multifaceted frameworks, the decent work agenda and the PRS process. This approach has yielded results in at least 17 countries in which both the PRSs and decent work country programmes are present.

79. A recent review shows that in some 35 countries significant headway was being made in bringing employment objectives in the priority setting and resource allocation processes tied to the PRS processes. This has been the result of greater participation of the private sector and of unions and government agencies concerned in setting the agenda, and in turn has led to an enhanced ownership and political buy-in at the country level.

80. The new generation of the PRS process is definitely more sensitive to the decent work objective, but there is considerable space for improvement. Many PRSs spell out the principal policies and programmes conducive to employment creation — such as agricultural and industrial growth, infrastructure, microenterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises, upgrading of the informal economy, vocational and technical training, provision of credit and special measures for productive youth and women's employment. While this is a major breakthrough, employment and poverty linkage should also be considered within all dimensions of the development policies

such as macroeconomic, trade, financial and investment policies during the preparation of PRSs.

81. The main challenge is to sustain the interest of ILO tripartite partners and other relevant stakeholders over the long period of the PRS cycle, especially in the review and revision phases, and to continue capacity-building and advocacy efforts.

F. Non-resident agency focal points

82. Evidence has shown that the specialized agencies managed to provide their input into country-level, system-wide mechanisms when they were able to participate in United Nations country team activities. This is particularly the case when specialized agencies have country offices and much less so when they do not.

83. In response to the 2004 triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (see General Assembly resolution 59/250), in which the Assembly requested the United Nations system to take measures to ensure that all relevant United Nations agencies participate in United Nations country-level development work, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) has engaged in an effort to identify ways to facilitate a systematic exchange of expertise, analytical and normative experience and knowledge of non-resident agencies, such as ILO, at the country level.

84. UNDG has identified a number of measures approved by CEB last year to strengthen the participation of non-resident agencies in United Nations country-level programming and operational activities. These include fielding focal points as non-resident agency representatives in United Nations country teams and focal points or coordination officers in non-resident agency headquarters or regional offices. Fourteen pilot countries will be implementing these measures this year. Other countries are expected to make progress in this regard as well. The Resident Coordinator workplan, assessment and annual report of these pilot countries will have a special section related to outreach activities promoting the participation of non-resident agencies at the country level.

85. The presence of these focal points should facilitate the dissemination of knowledge, expertise and normative experience, but also programmes and tools related to the ILO decent work agenda — e.g., decent work country programmes and the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work — and thus facilitate the inclusion of the decent work agenda's priorities in country-level strategies such as the CCA, UNDAF and PRS, and in joint programming around a shared international development agenda. It could also promote multipartners' initiatives around the decent work agenda. This outcome, however, will depend on how effectively non-resident agency focal points will work in linking the global ILO agenda with country-level work.

G. Guidance note for reporting on the Millennium Development Goals

86. The adoption of new targets on full and productive employment and decent work and related indicators will further contribute to making the employment and decent work agenda central to national efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and in the formulation of United Nations system regional and

country-level support. The inclusion of these targets in the guidance note on the Millennium Development Goal national reporting on progress in achieving those goals will further contribute to this outcome.

H. Guidelines for common country assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework

87. A revision of the CCA and UNDAF guidelines in the near future, which emphasizes the central role of employment goals for poverty reduction and sustainable development, would also facilitate the Resident Coordinator's work in promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all in the system's country-level strategies and programmes supporting national efforts. Such a revision could be foreseen for the next UNDAF cycle.

IV. Conclusions

88. The ministerial declaration adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 2006 has added new impetus to the work of the United Nations system in making the goal of full and productive employment and decent work for all a priority. It has also helped to take this goal beyond the ILO constituencies and into the mainstream. However, this recognition needs to be translated into policy frameworks and internalized in the work of the United Nations system. This will require mainstreaming analytical work relating to the goal of full and productive employment and decent work for all in relevant reports of the Secretary-General to various intergovernmental bodies, particularly functional commissions. It will also require strengthening the analytical and programmatic support of the United Nations system to countries to help them in translating these goals into national development priorities and strategies. In this regard, the ILO Toolkit should be used and extended as a framework for country-level joint programming to promote and realize the goals of full and productive employment and decent work.

V. Recommendations

89. The recommendations listed below refer to the theme of the current coordination segment.

A. Policy level

1. **In reviewing the implementation of the various sectors of the United Nations development agenda, the functional commissions could pay particular attention to assessing the impact of policies in their specific area on the realization of full and productive employment and decent work for all.**

2. **The role of the regional commissions in the follow-up to the ministerial declaration of 2006 should be strengthened with a view to addressing regional needs and priorities.**

3. **The cooperation among the regional commissions and between regional commissions and other regional actors should be strengthened and focused on employment and decent work.**

4. **Special initiatives and projects should be put in place for the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals in post-conflict countries and other countries in special situations, particularly through employment generation schemes.**

5. **The Policy Coherence on Growth, Investment and Jobs Initiative (PCI) promoted by ILO with selected agencies, or similar initiatives, could be extended to all member agencies of CEB with a view to promoting multidisciplinary and multisectoral approaches system-wide to adapting employment-related policies and programmes to existing processes.**

6. **The ILO's three-phased approach to promote the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all should be further developed, and a system-wide, time-bound action plan should be adopted for 2010-2015 to achieve the international commitments regarding the promotion of these goals.**

7. **The engagement of governments, the private sector, trade unions, NGOs and other DWCP constituents should become an integral part of United Nations system country-level strategies and programmes and inter-agency efforts to assist national governments in formulating, implementing and monitoring employment-related policies, programmes and activities.**

8. **Gender mainstreaming should become an essential objective of joint United Nations agencies' efforts to promote employment both at the policy and operational levels in order to yield more effective results in ensuring gender parity in employment opportunities and remuneration.**

B. Operational level

9. **All funds, programmes and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system should continue their efforts to follow up on the ministerial declaration at the country level, ensuring that Common Country Assessments, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, Poverty Reduction Strategies, where they exist, and other frameworks and instruments designed to guide country-level operational activities are geared to promote a sustained and well-coordinated implementation of full and productive employment and the decent work agenda.**

10. **The United Nations system funds, programmes and specialized agencies should: (a) develop information and knowledge management systems on the decent work agenda to share their expertise in country-level programming; and (b) identify and share existing tools on themes relevant to the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work and define their baselines to report on progress.**

11. CEB should promote the use of the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work and its extension as a framework for country-level joint programming promoting the goals of full and productive employment and decent work and adapting it for use at the regional and global levels as well.

12. All non-resident agencies, such as ILO, need to allocate additional resources to increase their capacity to be involved in country-level activities, including participation in meetings of the United Nations country teams, joint strategy meetings, prioritization retreats, regional coordination meetings, and so forth.

13. United Nations system organizations — resident and non-resident agencies — should be encouraged to develop strategic alliances or partnerships/clusters in delivering specific outcomes related to the employment goals as identified by country-level system strategies and programmes.

14. System-wide indicators and tools should be developed to assess the impact of technical policies and programmes on employment and the livelihood of the poor, with special attention to impact on gender mainstreaming.

15. The agencies of the United Nations system and United Nations country teams should strengthen their participation in ILO expert group meetings on the decent work agenda and in other platforms to develop strong awareness of the global agenda and promote synergies in each other's development work.

16. Agencies of the United Nations system, in collaboration with ILO, should develop systematic training programmes for technical staff to raise awareness and adapt their technical programmes to ensuring positive employment and a decent work-related impact on the livelihood of the poor.